Winter 2016
Carleton University
Department of Political Science

PECO 5502 W (Selected Problems in Political Economy II)
Also listed as SOCI 5505, PSCI 5502
The Political Economy of Social Change
Thurs. 14:35 - 17:25
Dunton Tower 1524

Instructor: Richard Westra
Office: Room 1503 Dunton Tower
Office Hours: Thursday 11:00 AM-1PM
Phone: 613 520-2600 ext. 7566
E-mail: Richard.westra@carleton.ca

Course Description

There certainly exists a surplus of academic writing on the malignancies of the current order from its layers of exploitations and oppressions through its disgraceful inequalities to its glaring environmental non-sustainability. There is also interest of late in the global growth and interlinking of protest movements. But there is a paucity of attention being devoted to the morning after question? If either progressive political movements accede to power or current regimes (as odious as many are) vaporize, then what? Surely it is time for progressive policy actors, activists, dissidents, forward looking graduate students to begin to think seriously about future directed social change. This course does precisely that: it moves from questions of from where substantive knowledge of human material reproduction derives to those of how such knowledge can be put to making a progressive, economically viable, redistributive, eco-sustainable future of human flourishing.

Students are encouraged to think creatively about how social change may be brought about in the here and now. Such creative thinking is necessarily foregrounded in critique of the narrow framing of social alternatives in terms of soviet-style state centralized planning and “the market”. The course critically examines a variety of new alternatives on offer from socialists, greens, feminists, anarchists and others. It concludes by asking the question whether even if it is accepted that viable progressive alternatives do exist is a road open to get there?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation……….20%
Presentations……… 40 %
Final course essay….40%
Total………………100%

Required Text:

January 7. Introduction: No Way Out?
Exit from Globalization chapter 1
[Following discussion, time to be devoted to choosing presentation topics]

January 14. Soviet-style socialism and Marx’s Legacy
Exit from Globalization chapters 2 and 3.
Peter Hudis, Marx’s Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism (Leiden: Brill, 2012) selected chapters.

January 21. Economic Principles Beyond “State” and “Market”
Recommended reading:

Exit from Globalization chapter 4
Naomi Klein, This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014).
James Gustave Speth, The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) chapters 6, 7, 8, 11.

February 11. Climate Change Ultimatum: Ecosocialist Response
Recommended reading:
February 25. **Feminist, LBGT Progressive Futures**
Recommended reading:

March 3. **Confederalism and Community: An Anarchist Future**
Recommended reading:
David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso: 2012) chapters 3 and 5.

March 10. **Socialism Back to the Future with Markets**
*Exit from Globalization*, chapter 5.
Recommended reading:

March 17. **Are there Real Utopias, Socialist or Otherwise?**
*Exit from Globalization*, chapter 6.

March 24. **There must be Some Way Out of Here?**
*Exit from Globalization*, chapter 7.
Eric Olin Wright, *Envisioning Real Utopias*, chapters 8, 9, 10, 11.

March 31 & April 7. **Conclusion: Presentations of Final Essay Topics**